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14 March 1983

4. C/M5

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Committee Members

FROM:

Executive Assistant to the DDCI

SUBJECT: Minutes of 3 March 1983 Executive Committee Meeting:
Recruitment

1. The Executive Committee met on 3 March 1983 to review recommendations of a recent Inspector General Survey of recruitment, particularly the entry-on-duty processing phase. Mr. Briggs (Executive Director) chaired the session; participants included Messrs. McMahon (DDCI); Fitzwater (DDA); Stein (DDO); Gates (DDI); Hineman (DDS&T); Taylor (IG); Glerum (D/OP); and [redacted] (CT Task Force).

2. Mr. Taylor highlighted the major findings of the IG Survey on EOD Processing. He praised the cooperation his staff had received from the Office of Personnel, noting many recommendations had already been implemented. The inspection surfaced two major categories of complaints: the length of time required to bring new employees on duty; and the mistakes made during processing. Two categories of solutions were offered--procedural and organizational. Procedural recommendations included weeding out more applicants earlier in the process, reducing the number of steps in the process, reducing the length of processing to four months, and making the process less cumbersome for those going through it. Organizationally, the survey recommended creating a new Office of Employment, bringing together elements of the three offices involved in processing--Personnel, Medical Services and Security. Mr. Taylor thought these procedural and organizational changes should go hand-in-hand and that the time was right for making them. He also pointed out that the key to success would be more direct component involvement in the recruitment process.

3. [redacted] reviewed the progress made by his recently formed Career Trainee Task Force. He noted plans to lessen dependence on advertising for CT recruits and to increase dependence on the Academic Associate Program. He noted that the D/EEO had surfaced some good candidates through participating in job fairs. He mentioned that administering the PAT-B earlier in the application process had helped, but noted the Agency still was not getting the 60 applicant files a week required to meet its hiring goals. [redacted] observed that the drug disqualification policy--particularly different interpretations of that policy--eliminates many potential candidates. The Director of Security

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25X1 has agreed to help clarify that policy and suggested using a "hot line" for answering recruiters' questions regarding "recreational use of soft drugs." The DDCI favored this idea. In response to questions, [] noted several administrative hurdles that have slowed his progress. Before turning to Mr. Glerum, Mr. McMahon noted previous reviews of the recruitment process and cases that had come to his attention indicating the recruitment process needed to be improved. He pointed out that former DDCI Inman had initiated this particular review last year because of complaints he had received.

25X1 4. Mr. Glerum acknowledged that the recruitment system had some weaknesses. He believed most of the recent problems, however, could be attributed to overloading the system to meet the FY-83 ceiling increases. As the number of people in the pipeline approaches the goal of [] suggested in a previous review, backlogs and delays should be eased. Mr. Glerum reviewed improvements that have been made and noted the need to work more on improving "customer relations," which will now be included in performance evaluations. Personnel processing assistant slots will be upgraded from GS-07s to GS-08s. Mr. Glerum asked members to provide him feedback directly so he could solve problems. He lauded components for handling applicants more expeditiously and encouraged them to do more "selling" of the Agency. He pointed out that a modern ADP tracking system was necessary to improve applicant processing. Mr. Glerum advised against the recommended organizational changes, noting no command and control problems existed among OP, OMS and OS. After seriously considering the suggested changes, his office concluded that the current centralized system would serve the Agency better. Mr. Glerum stated that his office was prepared to deal with existing problems and would like to get on with it.

5. Mr. Briggs asked for members' comments on the IG's recommendations, the suggested reorganization, and their willingness to support additional line involvement in the recruitment process. Mr. Hineman noted that the recruitment process had been a long-time concern and periodic fine tuning had not seemed to solve anything. He found merit in the IG's suggestions but noted that as organizational changes were made, some people changes would also probably be necessary. He did not think upgrading processing assistant slots to GS-08s would help much. He thought concerns about redundancy in the suggested new office could be worked out. If the new office were not tried, he suggested there might be merit in returning the Office of Personnel to the DDA. He noted that during better times applicant processing took six months and that was still much too long. Three to four months should be an attainable goal. Whatever changes were made, Mr. Hineman urged not turning off the pipeline in the process.

6. Mr. Fitzwater advised that the average applicant processing time at NSA was six months and at the Department of Defense it was five months. He agreed with the problems cited in the IG survey but not the solutions. The two major problems in his view were the long processing time and poor

communications. He did not think the suggested reorganization would improve the system and thought it could be detrimental to the polygraph operators in Security. Mr. Fitzwater suggested a reorganization of Personnel's Professional Staffing Branch (see attached), however, which he thought would facilitate enhanced personal attention and greater dialogue between components and applicants. He said that personnel processing assistant slots should be higher than GS-08s.

7. Mr. Gates noted having participated in several senior reviews of the recruitment process with no apparent positive results. He was sympathetic to the IG's recommendations. He suggested that problems with recruitment might be draining other Personnel resources, with other programs suffering as a result. He noted continuing disappointment that the Office of Personnel was not being aggressive in improving benefits and services. With disincentives to Government service increasing, he pointed out the need to do whatever possible to make it easier to bring new employees on board and to use more imagination in working harder to retain them. He also said that personnel increases expected in 1984 and 1985 make it unlikely that our recruitment efforts will taper off. He suggested that more fine tuning would not be sufficient and advocated at least two organizational changes be seriously considered: returning the Office of Personnel to the DDA to again put one person in charge of all recruitment elements and then splitting that office into an Office of Employment and an Office of Benefits and Services. Even if no organizational changes were made, he urged more component involvement in recruitment. He also encouraged more willingness to be creative in using the student co-op program as a means of recruiting minorities. He suggested making better use of employee probationary periods. In closing, he noted that the recruitment problem was an institutional one that had transcended the tours of several Directors of Personnel.

8. Mr. Stein observed that despite the length of applicant processing time, the process could be considered effective if measured by the few security problems the Agency has had. He suggested the process should be shortened, however, and the people involved should be upgraded and provided additional training in interpersonal skills. He favored more line involvement and thought a case could be made for returning the Office of Personnel to the DDA. He did not favor the suggested reorganization, noting it could be counterproductive to remove people from their professional peers (e.g., polygraph operators). He said that he would be willing to contribute some people to help improve the process.

9. Mr. Briggs commented that at the high point of accelerated recruitment build-up during the Korean War, applicant processing took three months. He thought four months was a desirable goal. He emphasized that if procedural and organizational changes are not monitored all the way down the line, they will not be effective. He added that in those single career track offices like OP where many employees spend a long time in one office, more lateral movement would be a healthy thing.

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10. Mr. McMahon said that he had found the discussion very helpful and hoped that it had also been instructive for Mr. Glerum. He noted that he and Mr. Briggs would think about the points made and reach the necessary decisions. He would not make a decision to reorganize without being certain it would result in an obvious net plus. Mr. McMahon said that he disagreed with the arguments given for not moving polygraph operators out of the Office of Security. He was sympathetic to the need to upgrade some people in Personnel and to bring in some additional help. He thought a great deal could be accomplished by being more attentive to the public relations aspects of recruiting. Mr. McMahon commended the IG Staff for its courageous report that provided considerable food for thought, and he welcomed its offering solutions as well as problems.

11. Mr. Glerum commented that too much weight had been put on the long processing time and said that no evidence existed that it caused the Agency to lose candidates. [redacted] strongly disagreed. Mr. Gates, noting that he was losing specialists who were getting better offers in the private sector, reiterated his concern for improving the total personnel process. Mr. Glerum advised that his office had many ideas in the benefits and services area but that he was being held back in using the DCI's special authorities. The meeting was then adjourned.

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Attachment:
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